

# Procrastination Workshop

Megan Pinfield MA, RCC





# Sentence Stems...

---

- Provide 5 answers for each of the following sentence stems:
- If I didn't Procrastinate I...
- If I didn't struggle with procrastination how would my life be different? What would I be doing?
- If I stopped procrastinating what new problems would I have to face that I don't have to contend with now?

# The BIG FIVE

<h2>Fear of Failure</h2>	<p>You cannot control other people's responses to your work.</p> <p><b>Perfectionism:</b> Having unreachable standards will discourage you from starting</p> <p><b>Buying Double Insurance</b></p>
<h2>Fear of Success</h2>	<p>Sometimes students are afraid of what might happen if they are successful or if others see them as successful</p>
<h2>Fear of Losing Control</h2>	<p>When people feel out of control they sometimes develop a rebellious attitude in order to gain a greater sense of control.</p> <p>For students this may mean resenting when an instructor assigns a due date because it is perceived as controlling.</p>
<h2>Fear of Separation</h2>	<p>Afraid that successful completion could take us away from those that are important to us. Such as not wanting to graduate and leave behind our friends.</p>
<h2>Fear of Attachment</h2>	<p>Afraid that successful completion could draw others too close to us. For instance when a student is about to graduate and knows that his girlfriend wants to get engaged as soon as he is out of school.</p>



## Other reasons why people procrastinate:

---

- Fear of the unknown (what's next after graduation?)
- Fear of change
- Peer influence
- Lack of relevance
- Lack of self-confidence
- Uncertainty about what is expected
- Pursuing someone else's goals (like parents, spouse or partner's)
- The task is aversive (like picking up dog \*#\$\$%& from the lawn)
- Habit
- Low frustration tolerance
- Difficulty making decisions in general
- Dependency and Help-Seeking behavior
- Poor organization skills
- Poor Time Management skills
- Learned Helplessness
- Uncertainty about career choice/path
- Lack of knowledge or expertise to manage the task
- Some Mental Health issues like Depression and Anxiety may contribute to the habit of procrastination

# The Procrastinator's Code

from Burka and Yuen

- ✓ I must be perfect
- ✓ Everything I do should go easily and without effort
- ✓ It is safer to do nothing than to take a risk and fail
- ✓ I should have no limitations
- ✓ If it's not done right, it's not worth doing at all
- ✓ I must avoid being challenged
- ✓ If I succeed, someone will get hurt
- ✓ If I do well this time, I must always do well.
- ✓ Following someone else's rules means I'm giving in
- ✓ I can't afford to let go of everything or anyone
- ✓ There is a "right" answer and I will wait until I've found it
- ✓ If I expose my real self, people won't like me
- ✓ I will not put in my best effort so if I do poorly I will be able to tell myself that if I had worked harder, I could have done better.

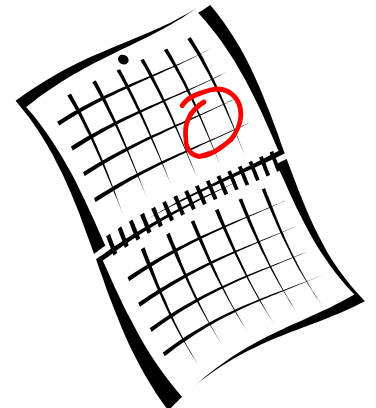




## Behavioral strategies for Procrastination Intervention

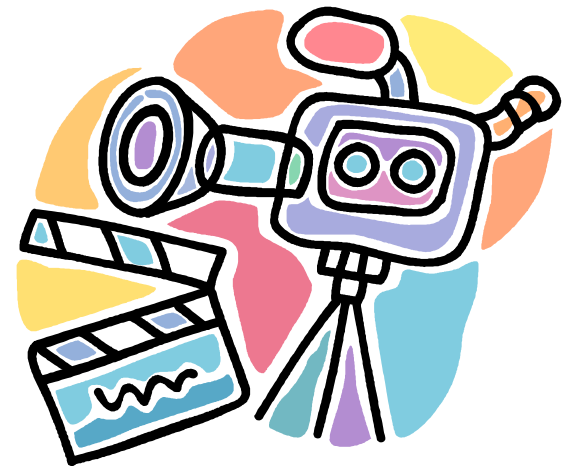
---

- *Ask Yourself the following:*
- Was there a time when I didn't procrastinate or it was less troublesome?
- What was I doing differently at that time?
- What was different about that task or situation?
- Could I do that again? Could I make a necessary change?
- What have I done in the past that has helped me not procrastinate?
- Could I do that again?



# Goal setting

- *Why should I have a goal?*
  - It's hard to know where to start if you don't know what you have to do.
  - It's hard to stay motivated if you don't have a direction.
  - It's hard to stay on task if you don't know what the task is.
- *Goals should be:*
  - Meaningful & Desired
  - Believable, realistic & Achievable
  - Concrete, Specific & Clearly defined
  - Stated in the positive
  - Vividly imagined & internalized
  - In writing!
  - Measurable
  - Prioritized



# The Anxious Afraid Procrastinator

The "anxious-afraid" procrastinator is an individual who feels overwhelmed and pressured by the tasks or relationships at hand.

The "anxious-afraid procrastinator" may:

- Feel pressure to succeed
- Be perfectionistic
- Be unrealistic about time
- Be uncertain about his/her goals
- Be dissatisfied with his/her achievements
- Be sensitive to criticism and failure
- Be fearful of relational change



This type of person often maintains high levels of efficiency and productivity, however he/she easily becomes over-stressed and is highly susceptible to procrastination.

Attempts to relax often give rise to more guilt, pressure and apprehension. This leads to paralysis.

When the focus is on relationships, the individual will avoid completing tasks that threaten to change the desired levels of intimacy/dependency in their relationship.

# The "Anxious-Afraid Procrastinator"

<h2>Characteristics</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Hard working, competent and high achieving</li><li>•Fearful of being judged</li><li>•Feelings of guilt, inadequacy, incompetence, inferiority or superiority</li><li>•Critical of self and others</li><li>•Always focused on future not present or past</li><li>•Seeks a lot of advice from others and hesitates making decisions on his/her own</li><li>•Fearful of intimacy in relationships</li></ul>
<h2>Irrational Beliefs</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•"My worth as a person is determined by my ability and my achievements"</li><li>•"I must always do well and be approved of by others"</li><li>•"I must be in control and resist control by someone else"" I can't risk exposure and failure"</li><li>•I must maintain and reach my unrealistic goals"</li></ul>

# If you are the "Anxious-Afraid Procrastinator"

<h2>Fear of failing</h2>	<p>Identify alternate plans for success in case your original plan doesn't work</p> <p>Use positive self-talk</p> <p>Replace the thoughts which lead you to procrastinate with more healthy ones</p>
<h2>Tasks you avoid</h2>	<p><b>Ask yourself:</b></p> <p>What excuses do I use?</p> <p>What were my thoughts &amp; Feelings?</p> <p>What did I do instead of work?</p> <p>What was the outcome?</p>
<h2>Your worries and doubts</h2>	<p><b>Ask yourself:</b></p> <p>What is the worst possible outcome?</p> <p>What would I do if the worst happened?</p> <p>What skills and strengths do I have that will help me cope?</p> <p>How will I forgive myself for making a mistake?</p>
<h2>Your relational fears</h2>	<p><b>Ask yourself:</b></p> <p>How do I feel about intimacy?</p> <p>What are my intimacy boundaries?</p> <p>How will I feel if my boundaries are crossed?</p>
<h2>Helpful strategies</h2>	<p>Keep work and play time separate</p> <p>Identify your unrealistic goals and modify them</p> <p>Practice relaxation exercises</p> <p>" Sometimes 'Good' is "good enough"</p>



## Now that I understand Procrastination... What can I do about it?

---

- Once you understand why you procrastinate you can begin to change your behavior.
- Sometimes this might mean getting some counseling for personal issues if that is what is feeding the procrastination, or simply learning some time management and planning techniques.
- Always reward yourself when you do your work on time! Plan a reward for each small chunk of work you complete. This helps keep it interesting as well as conditions you to complete things.
- If you don't know your career or life goals you should consider speaking to a counselor or your Academic Director. It is hard to stay motivated to work if you don't know why you are working.
- Write out your goals and keep them posted somewhere you can see them regularly.
- Make friends in your program. It's more fun to do the work if all your buddies are doing it too.
- Make sure you get clarification when you don't understand something. It is discouraging to think of beginning a big project if you don't really understand it. This will make anyone procrastinate!
- Make yearly, quarterly, weekly and daily schedules for yourself so you know what has to be done when.
- Take advantage of campus resources and Student Success workshops (like Time Management, Exam Anxiety, When Instructors talk too fast etc.)



## How to get in touch with the counselor:

---

- Burnaby: 604-298-5400
- Vancouver 604-683-9200
- E-mail: [mpinfield@aii.edu](mailto:mpinfield@aii.edu)

